

# BIBLE TRUTH

VERSUS

OPPOSITIONS OF SCIENCE.

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# BIBLE TRUTH

VERSUS

“OPPOSITIONS OF SCIENCE,

FALSELY SO CALLED.”—1 Tim. 6: 20.

BEING

AN ANSWER TO CERTAIN OPINIONS

OF

PROFESSOR ALEXR. McKNIGHT AND OTHER WRITERS,

ON CREATION.

BY JOHN G. MARSHALL.

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# BIBLE TRUTH,

VERSUS

## OPPOSITIONS OF SCIENCE, ETC.

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In the paper by Professor Alexr. McKnight, "on Confessions and Creeds," read by him before the Evangelical Alliance, at its late meeting at Montreal, he plainly announced as his belief, that the Divine Creator did not "make all things *out of nothing*, in six days;" and says "this is nowhere affirmed in Scripture." Several speculative geologists and others,—some of them infidels as to certain parts, or of the whole of divine revelation,—have, from time to time, published similar opinions on the subject. Without any design of reviewing the whole of the learned Professor's paper, it is my intention, here, to oppose that opinion, and on the direct contrary, to show from Scripture authority, both as to its *letter* and obvious construction and *meaning*, that there were no such separate or double periods of creation, as intimated by the Professor, and asserted by the other writers to whom reference has been made; but that the whole of the creation, both as to material substances from nonentity, and the rest of the divine work, described in Gen. ch. 1, were accomplished within the *six days* therein mentioned.

I am well aware, that in undertaking to oppose and refute that opinion of a learned Professor of Theology, and ordained minister of religion, I may, on a first thought and view, be considered by some, or even many, to be chargeable with a degree of presumption, being neither such a professor, or a minister, but merely one of the laity. It therefore seems proper, if not absolutely needful, to mention some of the special acquirements and circumstances which may be thought, in some fair degree, sufficient to qualify me to enter upon the contro-

versy. They are as follows: More than fifty-five years ago, being, as I presume, about the term of the natural life of Professor McKnight, having become very deeply concerned as to my spiritual salvation, I commenced a prayerful and most earnest and anxious search and study of the sacred Scriptures throughout, to learn the doctrines and duties of our benign and holy religion, for assured belief and righteous conduct; and have continued the same earnest and diligent course, repeatedly every day, to the present time. Shortly after its commencement, I began and during those religious exercises continued preparing a manual of the Scriptures on those doctrines and duties, and within the last year published them in full in a volume, intended for the use of ministers of religion, superintendents and teachers of sabbath schools, bible classes, and also for private christians. From time to time, I have read several systems of Théology; also the Histories of the Church, by Eusebius, Mosheim, and the Milner's; and, in part, that most elaborate and comprehensive work, "A complete Body of Divinity, by the Rev. Thomas Stackhouse, A.M.," a Divine of the Church of England; also Scott's and Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentaries on the Scriptures, the latter repeatedly read throughout; also, in part, the Commentaries of Henry and Whitby; also the works of Arminius, Wesley, Fletcher, Chalmers, and numerous other publications on theological subjects. During the last fifteen years I published answers to several writings of the Rev. Mr. Maturin; also to the seven sceptical and notorious Essays and Reviews; and two volumes in answer to the similar infidel publications of Bishop Colenso, in one of which answers to the Essays and Reviews, this same subject of the six days' creation, and the geological, and other objections thereto, were discussed. I have also issued some smaller publications on Scriptural subjects; and further a volume of sermons on several of the most important doctrines and duties of our divine religion. As it will not be contended that *now* the laying on of hands, or any other form of ordination to the sacred ministry, confers any *supernatural* gift or *grace*, as was conveyed by the first Apostles, it must, of course, be admitted that a layman, in the same time, and with equal diligence and prayerful search and study of the Scriptures and theological subjects generally, may become as well acquainted with them as a person ordained for the ministry. In length of time of study of



the Scriptures, I have much the advantage of Professor McKnight, and probably in earnestness and diligence in that study am in equality with him. Taking all these personal facts and circumstances into consideration, the advantage of the learned Professor over me, if any, will not be great, on the subjects in question, which, as before remarked, depend almost exclusively on the letter of Scripture, as given in our standard version.

The whole of the Professor's Essay is given in an "Extra of the Montreal Witness," which contains a full, and it may be presumed, a duly authorized report of all the proceedings at that meeting of the Alliance.

The passages of the Professor's Essay, which will here be opposed are as follows :—"The doctrine of creation consists of two parts, sometimes distinguished as the first and second creation,—the one affirming that God made substance out of nothing; and the other, that He combined and arranged these substances into the system of the universe. As the Science of the Seventeenth Century could throw no light on the world's early history, the Westminster Assembly, naturally enough, made no distinction between creation out of nothing, and the work of the six days. The creation of elementary substance was assumed to be part of the first day's work. Had they lived in our time, they might have seen it advisable to leave a gap or gulf between the two. There are passages of Scripture that carry us back to a time before the world was, and are available for proof of creation out of nothing. There are other passages descriptive of the six day's work, which need not be understood as teaching that the first day of the six began with non-entity. The demand for time made by the geologist, affords a fair reason why we should separate the first from the second creation, and cease to affirm, what is nowhere affirmed in the Scriptures, that God made all things *out of nothing* in six days. \* \* \* The one point to which I call attention is, that the Biblical doctrine of creation is divisible into two parts; and that the union of the two into one, is a step in the way of systematizing which seemed unobjectionable two centuries ago, but which ought to be abandoned now, in view of the present state of physical science."

These assertions of the Professor, as to the "two creations," and "a gap or gulf between them," I here oppose, and assert to be contrary to the letter and meaning of Scripture on the subject, and positively affirm that the creation of the material substances of the earth, and all the creatures and things therein, and connected with it, were commenced, formed, and completed within the six days mentioned in ch. i of Genesis. The following are the words of the first *five* verses of that ch. giving the creations of the first day :—" In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good. And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day."

The following are the words in Exod. xx. 11, "for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day." Here we also see that the making of the heaven and earth are in direct connection with the making of all the creatures and things therein. The word *made* must *here* have the *same* meaning as *created*, for it is certain that the beasts, birds, fish, man and woman, and other living creatures, were not called into existence until after the creations of the first day; and therefore the material heaven and earth were also created within the same six days. The whole of the *creations* being mentioned in that one connected sentence, shows that the whole divine work was commenced and completed within that specified time.

Now surely Professor McKnight himself, and all who hold the same opinion with him, must admit that there is not, in any of these words, the slightest intimation of two separate periods or times of creations, or of any pause or gap, as it is called, between the several divine acts and proceedings mentioned in those five verses of Gen., relating to the creations of that first day. They are just as successive, continuous, and connected, as those of the other five days described in that first chapter. It was evidently the design of the inspired writer to describe fully and accurately the creations of each of the six days, and he has done it with the utmost precision. The



conjunctive particle *and*, connects the two first verses, the first showing the creation, from non-entity, of the material substances or elements, and the second verse describing them as then being in a mixed, confused, or chaotic state.

One learned divine and commentator has written thus on those two first verses :—" *In the beginning*."—Before the creative acts mentioned in this chapter, all was Eternity. Therefore *in the beginning*, must necessarily mean the commencement of time which followed, or rather was produced by God's creative acts, as an effect follows or is produced by a cause." Now, if as asserted, there were two separate acts of creation, with an interval of time, or gap between them, there must have been *two first days* of creation ;—*one*, when the chaotic mass of material substances was produced, and the *other*, when in the third verse, " God said Let there be light and there was light," and then proceeded to perform the creative, arranging, and formative acts mentioned in the succeeding parts of the chapter. But there is no mention of any such *dual* first days, but at the close of v. 5, the words are ;—" And the evening and the morning were the first day." The works or acts of that day were, the creation of the elements or material substances,—the production of light,—the division between light and darkness, and naming the light,—"*Day*" and the darkness,—"*Night*." On the words,—"*The earth was without form and void*," the same learned commentator has said :—" In this place, and wherever else the words,—'*without form and void*' are used, they convey the idea of *confusion* and *disorder*. \* \* God seems at first to have created the elementary principles of all things, and they formed the grand mass or matter, which in this state must be without arrangement, or any distinction of parts. When this congeries of elementary principle was brought together, God was pleased to spend six days, in assimilating, assorting, and arranging the materials out of which he built up, not only the earth, but the whole of the solar system." On the words in ch. 22—" *On the Seventh day God ended all his work which he had made ;*" the same learned writer has truly said :—" It is the general voice of Scripture, that God finished the whole of the creation in six days and rested the *Seventh*." This has also been the voice of the Jewish church and all the Christian churches to the present day. There is not a

passage, or word, or any part of either the Old or New Testament Scriptures, to intimate or give countenance to the contrary opinion, that there was any cessation of divine operation, or protracted period between the creation mentioned in the first verse of that first chapter, and the conclusion of the whole work at the end of the six days. The Jewish church, from the time of its constitution at Sinai, through thousands of years to the present day, has never held that there was any such cessation or protracted period; nor has it ever been held by any of the Christian churches, *orthodox* or *heterodox*, through the 1874 years of Christianity; but all the Churches, under both dispensations, have always considered and held, according to the obvious meaning of those five first verses of that chapter, that the whole of the creations and arrangements mentioned in those verses, took place within that first day named in v. 5. None of the Church Histories or Commentaries on the Scriptures, express that contrary opinion. This latter is chiefly the mere speculation, or rather *invention* of certain geologists and others, within comparatively modern times, who have been sceptical or infidel as to divine revelation; and unhappily that erroneous opinion has been sanctioned, or admitted, by a few theological characters, partly in condescension, conciliation, or accommodation, as it would seem, to the views of the others. If so, it is both unguarded and improper, as tending to lessen a belief in the Sacred Scriptures, and their paramount authority, among the general population.

With all that varied and abounding weight of Scriptural and other authority which has just been given against that erroneous opinion, it does seem strange, that the learned Professor McKnight, should have so confidently avowed that opinion, before such a select and intelligent assembly; and still more extraordinary, that he should have done it, without producing a single fact or authority, Scriptural, or of any other kind, towards its support.

The Professor admits, that "the Westminster Assembly, in the Seventeenth century, naturally enough made no distinction between creation out of nothing, and the work of the six days. The creation of elementary substance was assumed to be part of the first day's work." Now the persons who composed that assembly were learned and eminent men, it may well be presumed, not at all inferior, either in theo-

logy or science generally, to those in more modern times, who have held, or to those who now hold that contrary opinion.

Rev. Edward Hitchcock, Principal of Amherst College, in the United States, in his volume on "Religion and Geology" favours that opinion of the two creations, with a very long period between them, but he admits, that the literal and obvious meaning of Scripture on the point is, to the effect, that the whole of creation was commenced and completed within the six days; but he contends, that the words of Scripture will bear that other meaning of the two separate and distinct creations.

In the Essay in opposition to the Mosaic Cosmogony, by C. W. Goodwin, which I reviewed in my answers to the volume of Essays and Reviews; he differs from the other geologists in their cosmogonies, and condemns them, and admits the plainness and consistency of the Scripture account of Creation. Referring to the discordant theories of certain geologists, he says:—"How can it be otherwise; when the task proposed is to evade the plain meaning of language, and to introduce obscurity into one of the simplest stories ever told, for the sake of making it accord with the complex system of the universe which modern science has unfolded." He further says of the Scripture account:—"Remarkable as this narrative is for simple grandeur, it has nothing in it which can properly be called poetical. It bears, on its face, no trace of mystical or symbolical meaning. Things are called by their right names, with a certain scientific exactness widely different from the imaginative Cosmogonies of the Greeks.

This Mr. Goodwin, however, gave a most extravagant and absurd Cosmogony theory of his own invention. In fact scarcely any two of those speculative theorists on the two periods of creation agree in all particulars. Some of them place the creation of the material substances or elements, and the commencement of the supposed vastly extended Chaotic State, at the end of the first verse of the chapter, and others fix it at the end of the second verse, and say that the regular formation of the earth, and the creation of all the creatures and things therein, and belonging to it, and the whole planetary system, commenced with verse 3, when light was called forth.

Here it may confidently be remarked, that it is quite improbable, that the Almighty and infinitely wise God, would create the material substances of the earth, and leave them in the dark and shapeless state of chaos mentioned in the second verse of the chapter, without any living creature, for many thousands or millions of years as those speculative geologists contend ; for it is certain, from the rest of the chapter, that neither vegetable production, beast, bird, fish, man, or living creature of any kind, or sun, moon, stars, or any part of the planetary system, were created until the subsequent days mentioned in that first chapter.

Several writers in modern times of more or less literary reputation and ability, have published works expressing that opinion of a vastly protracted period between the two several times of the creation. The chief semblance or pretence of proof advanced in support of that opinion, is drawn from geological grounds, as to the times required as *they* think for the formation of large rocks and boulders, and certain strata in the earth, and from the skeletons or parts of the bodies of animals, real or supposed, and other substances, found at various depths from the surface of the earth ; and which they contend, prove that this globe is of far greater antiquity than the time of its formation as given in ch. 1 of Genesis. Dr. Edward Hitchcock already mentioned, President of Amherst College, has expressed and elaborately endeavoured to prove that enlarged antiquity in his work on "Religion and Geology," contained in a course of Lectures. He is probably not quite so positive or settled on the point as some others, for he says :—"I wish it to be distinctly understood, that I am endeavouring to show only, that the language of Scripture will admit of an indefinite interval between the first creation of matter, and the six demiurgic days. I am willing to admit, at least for the sake of argument, that the common interpretation, which makes matter only six thousand years old, is the most natural. But I contend, that no violence is done to the language, by admitting the other interpretation." As to the formation of rocks he says :—"Now, for the most part, this process of forming rocks, by the accumulation of mud, is very slow. During violent floods indeed, and in a few limited spots, the accumulation is much more rapid, as the lake of Geneva through which the Rhone, loaded with detritus from the Alps passes, where

a delta has been formed two miles long and 900 feet thick, within eight hundred years." Why then, may not somewhat similar formations, and large rocks, have been produced in other places, not within only 800 years, but within the more than *four thousand years* since the general deluge ?

This same President Hitchcock has had the presumptuous boldness to say :—" Chemistry has demonstrated that the earth is already for the most part oxidized and therefore cannot literally be burned hereafter." And this in the face of these express words of sacred Scripture by an inspired Apostle, in 2 Peter iii. 7 and 10.—" But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire," &c.—" But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Verse 12. " Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth."

President Hitchcock has here even surpassed the antedeluvians in *unbelief*, if not *impiety*, for they only had the word of Noah for the deluge, but he has said, in express contradiction to those inspired Scriptures, that by reason of certain discoveries or conclusions in chemistry, the Almighty Creator and God of the Universe, not only *will not*, but *cannot* fulfil those his express and awful declarations.—Now, as a mere matter of opposition of Science, here is what Dr. Adam Clarke, it may be presumed as well instructed in chemistry, and a far more learned as well as pious divine than President Hitchcock, has said on those passages in Peter :—

" As the *electric or etherial fire* is that which in all likelihood God will use in the general conflagration, the noise occasioned by the application of this fire to such an immense *congeries* of *aqueous* particles as float in the atmosphere, must be terrible in the extreme." \* \*  
 " When the fire has conquered and decomposed the water, the elements, the *hydrogen* and oxygen airs, or gases, (the former of which is most highly inflammable, and the latter an eminent supporter of all combustion) will occupy *distinct* regions of the atmosphere, the hydrogen, by its very great levity, ascending to the top, while the oxygen, from its superior specific gravity, will keep *upon* or *near* the surface of the earth ; and thus, if different substances be once ignited,

the fire which is supported in this case not only by the oxygen, which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air, but also by a great additional quantity of oxygen, obtained from the decomposition of all aqueous vapours, will rapidly seize upon all other substances, on all terrestrial particles, and the whole frame of nature will be necessarily torn in pieces, and *thus the whole earth and all its works be burned up.*"

Now here is science opposed to science, both merely human. But independent of all knowledge of that nature, and of all suppositions or conceptions on the point, the glorious God of Truth, who is infinite in *wisdom*, and almighty in *power*, has plainly declared, as we see, that "the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up;" and He can always provide ways and means to effect it, and therefore, all the ignorant cavils, quibbles, and objections of fallible men, are not only worthless, but in a degree, *impious*.

This digression from the main subject in question has been made, chiefly to show the little, if any, value to be attached to the suppositions, arguments, and supposed proofs of Dr. Hitchcock in support of this erroneous opinion as to the two separate and distinct periods of creations. The late Rev. Dr. Harris, the author of that excellent work called "Mammon," wrote an octavo volume on the "Pre-Adamite earth." I have read part of the book, but would consider it time mis-spent to wade through the whole of it, for, notwithstanding his reputation as a literary character, and a good man, it is evident from Scripture and other valid authority, that neither he nor any other literary or scientific character, could, or can know anything more of a Pre-Adamite earth than is contained in the first twenty-five verses of the first chapter of Genesis; and which any rustic who can read them, can understand their meaning, being so plainly given,—just as well as the Scientists or literati of any age or country, all their productions on the subject being mere suppositions, or little better than fabulous conceptions.

As this answer to that erroneous opinion of the two times of creation rests entirely on the plain letter and authority of Scripture, it will be quite needless to enter upon any particulars or special review and examination of the several alleged geological and other proofs by those who hold that unscriptural opinion. It may be well however,



to give here, two or three instances or facts, well authenticated, to show the unsoundness and futility of that opinion as derived from geological and other alleged sources.

Dr. Adam Clarke, previously cited as an eminent authority on the whole subject, at the close of his comments on the book of Genesis, has written in the following terms concerning these geological and other strata and formations, and those producing them in opposition to the scripture account of the creation:—"A class of philosophers, professedly infidel, have assailed the Mosaic account of the formation of the Universe, and that of the general deluge, with such repeated attacks, as sufficiently proved, that in their apprehension, the pillars of their system must be shaken into ruin if those accounts could not be proved to be false. *Traditions* supporting accounts different from those in the sacred history, have been borrowed from the most barbarous as well as the most civilized nations, in order to bear on this argument. These backed by various geologic observations, made in extensive travels, experiments on the formation of different strata, or beds of earth, either by inundations or volcanic eruptions, have been all condensed into one apparently strong but strange argument, intended to overthrow the Mosaic account of the creation. The argument may be stated thus:—"The account given by Moses of the time when God commenced His creative acts, is too *recent*; for according to His Genesis, *six thousand* years have not yet elapsed since the formation of the universe; whereas a variety of phenomena prove that the earth itself, must have existed, if not from eternity, yet at least *fourteen* if not *twenty* thousand years."—"This," the Dr. says, "I call a *strange* argument, because it is well known, that all the ancient nations in the world, the Jews excepted, have to secure their honour and respectability, assigned to themselves, a *duration* of the most improbable length, and have multiplied *months*, *weeks*, and even *days*, into *years*, in order to support their pretensions to the most remote antiquity. The *millions* of years which have been assumed by the *Chinese* and the *Hindoos*, have been ridiculed for their manifest absurdity, even by those philosophers who have brought the contrary charge against the Mosaic account. So notorious are the pretensions to remote ancestry, and remote eras, in every false and fabricated system of family pedigree, and national antiquity, as to produce doubt

at the very first view of their subjects, and to cause the impartial enquirer after truth to take every step with the extreme of caution, knowing that in going over such accounts he everywhere treads on a kind of enchanted ground."

When in the midst of these a writer is found, who without saying a word of the systems of other nations, professes to give a simple account of the creation, and peopling of the earth, and to show the very conspicuous part that his own people acted among the various nations of the world, and who assigns to the earth, and to its inhabitants, a duration comparatively but as of *yesterday*, he comes forward with such a variety of claims to be heard, read, and considered, as no other writer can pretend to. And as he departs from the universal custom of all writers, on similar subjects, in assigning a comparatively recent date not only to his own nation, but to the universe itself, he must have been actuated by motives essentially *different* from those which have governed all other ancient historians and chronologists.

The generally acknowledged extravagance and absurdity of all the chronological systems of ancient times, the great simplicity and harmony of that of Moses, its facts evidently borrowed by others, though disgraced by the fables they have intermixed with them, and the very late invention of Arts and Sciences, all tend to prove at the very first view that the Mosaic account, which assigns the shortest duration to the earth, is the most ancient, and the most likely to be true. But all this reasoning has been supposed to be annihilated, by an argument brought against the Mosaic account of the Creation, by Mr. Patrick Brydone, F. R. S., drawn from the evidence of different eruptions of Mount *Ætna*. The reader may find this in his "Tour through Sicily and Malta," letter 7, where, speaking of his acquaintance with the *Canonico Recupero*, at Catania, who was then employed on writing a natural history of Mount *Ætna*, he says:—"Near to a vault which is now *thirty* feet below ground, and has probably been a burying place, there is a draw well, where there are several strata of *lava* (i.e., the liquid matter formed of stones, &c., which is discharged from the mountain in its eruptions) with earth to a considerable thickness over each stratum. *Recupero* has made use of this as an argument to prove the great antiquity of the eruptions of this mountain. For if it requires *two thousand* years and upwards, to

form but a scanty soil on the surface of a *lava*, there must have been more than that space of time between each of the eruptions which have formed these strata. But what shall we say of a pit they sunk near to *Jaci*, of a great depth? They pierced through *seven* distinct *lavas*, one under the other, the surfaces of which were parallel, and most of them covered with a thick bed of rich earth. Now, says he, the eruption which formed the lowest of these *lavas*, if we may be allowed to reason from analogy, must have flowed from the mountain at least *fourteen thousand* years ago!

"Recupero tells me, he is exceedingly embarrassed by these discoveries, in writing the history of the mountain: that Moses hangs like a dead weight upon him, and blunts all his zeal for enquiry, for that he *really has not the conscience to make his mountain so young, as that prophet makes the world.*

"The Bishop, who is strenuously orthodox, (for it is an excellent see) has already warned him to be upon his guard, and not to pretend to be a better natural historian than Moses; nor to presume to urge anything that may, in the smallest degree, be deemed contradictory to *his* sacred authority."

Though Mr. Brydone produces this as a sneer against revelation, bishops, and orthodoxy, yet the sequel will prove that it was good advice; and that the Bishop was much better instructed than either Recupero or Brydone, and that it would have been much to their credit had they taken his advice.

Dr. Clarke further writes:—"I have given, however, this argument at length, and even in the insidious dress of Mr. Brydone, whose faith in divine revelation appears to have been upon a par with that of *Signior Recupero*, both being built nearly on the same foundation, to show, from the answer, how slight the strongest arguments are, produced from insulated facts, by prejudice and partiality, when brought to the test of sober, candid, philosophical investigation, guided by an increased knowledge of the phenomena of nature." In answer to this argument, says Bishop Watson, (letters to Gibbon) 'it might be urged that the time necessary for converting *lava* into fertile fields, must be very different, according to the different consistencies of the *lava*, and their different situations with respect to *elevation* and *depression*, or their being exposed to winds, rains, and other

circumstances; as for instance, the quantity of ashes deposited over them after they had cooled, &c., &c., just as the time in which heaps of iron slag, which resembles *lava*, are covered with verdure, is different at different furnaces, according to the nature of the slag, and situation of the furnace; and something of this kind is deducible from the account of the Canon (Recupero) himself, since the *crevices* in the strata are often full of rich good soil, and have pretty large trees growing upon them. But should not all this be thought sufficient to remove the objection, I will produce the Canon an *analogy*, in opposition to his analogy, and which is grounded on more certain facts.

‘Ætna and Vesuvius resemble each other in the causes which produce their eruptions, in the nature of their *lava*, and in the time necessary to mellow them into soil fit for vegetation; or if there be any slight difference in this respect, it is probably not greater than that which subsists between different lavas of the same mountain.—This being admitted, which no philosopher will deny, the Canon’s (Recupero’s) analogy will produce just nothing at all, if we can produce an instance of *seven* different lavas, with *interjacent strata of vegetable earth*, which have flowed from Mount Vesuvius, within the space, not of *fourteen thousand*, but something less than *one thousand seven hundred* years; for then, according to our analogy, a *stratum of lava may be covered with vegetable soil in about two hundred and fifty years*, instead of requiring two thousand for that purpose.

• The eruption of Vesuvius, which destroyed *Herculaneum* and *Pompeii*, is rendered still more famous, by the death of Pliny, recorded by his nephew, in his letter to Tacitus. This event happened, A. D., 79, but we are informed by unquestionable authority (*Remarks on the nature of the soil of Naples and its vicinity*, by Sir William Hamilton, *Philos. Transact.*, vol. 61, p. 7) that the matter which covers the ancient town of Herculaneum is not the produce of *one* eruption *only*, for there are evident marks that the matter of *six* eruptions has taken its course over that which lies immediately over the town, and was the cause of its destruction. These strata are either of *lava* or burnt matter, with *veins of good soil between them*. “You perceive,” says the Bishop, “with what ease, a *little attention*, and *increase of knowledge*, may remove a great difficulty; but had we been able to say

nothing in explanation of this phenomenon, we should not have acted a very rational part in making our *ignorance* the *foundation of our infidelity*, or suffering a minute philosopher to rob us of our religion." "In this, as well as in all other cases," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "the foundation stands sure, being deeply and legibly impressed with God's Seal." See also Dr. Greaves's lectures on the Pentateuch. There is a very sensible paper, written by *Don Joseph Gioeni*, on the eruption of Etna in 1781, in which, among other valuable observations, I find the following note:—"I was obliged to traverse the current of lava made by the eruption of 1766, the most *ancient* of any that took this direction, viz: *Bronte*. I saw several streams of lava which had *crossed others*, and which afforded us evident proofs of the fallacy of the conclusions of those who seek to estimate the period of the formation of the beds of lava, from the change they have undergone. Some lava of *earlier* date than others, *still resist the weather*, and present a *vitreous* and *unaltered surface*, while the lava of *later* date already begin to be covered with vegetation. See Pinkerton on Rock, vol. 2, p. 395." Now, from these several facts and instances as to the lava, it would be perfectly reasonable to argue and conclude, that the different and alternate geological strata of earth, stone, and other substances, which are found at various depths from the surface, have been formed during somewhat similar periods as in those instances of the lava, and all within the more than four thousand years since the deluge.

Dr. Clarke has further written as follows:—"On the *geology* and astronomy of the book of Genesis, much has been written, both by the enemies and friends of revelation, but as Moses has said very little on these subjects, and nothing in a *systematic* way, it is unfair to invent a system pretendedly collected out of his words, and thus make him accountable for what he never wrote. There are systems of this kind, the preconceived fictions of their authors, for which they have sought support and credit, by tortured meanings, extracted from a few Hebrew roots, and then dignified them with the title of *The Mosaic system of the Universe*. This has afforded infidelity a handle which it has been careful to turn to its own advantage." The Dr. is perfectly right in his last remark, and it may be justly added that the writings on those subjects of such men as Dr. Harris, Dr. Hitchcock,

and some others, the professed friends of divine revelation, favouring and supporting, as they have done, that erroneous opinion of the two separate periods of creation, have, it is highly probable, in some or many instances, had a tendency to *strengthen* rather than to *lessen* or *remove* the objections of the avowed opponents of that revelation, and also injuriously affect the belief of other portions of the Scriptures, among many of the general populations, and especially the youth at literary institutions. And here it may, once for all, be said that it is more than probable, or may indeed be almost concluded, that neither the two authors above named, or few if any others who have written in support of the same opinion, have *personally* seen or looked into any of the excavations or depths of the earth, and seen and numbered their various strata, or have actually seen and examined the rocks, stones, supposed skeletons, and bones, and other remains and substances found or said to have been found therein, and given and asserted as proofs of the truth of that opinion. They have had their information on the subject chiefly, or entirely, at second or third hand, from others, who, as in nearly all such cases, have given magnified and exaggerated accounts concerning them.

Some of the supporters of that erroneous opinion of the two periods of Creation, probably feeling pressed with the fact of the Noachian deluge, as being sufficient to account for those geological and other strata and formations, and skeletons and other remains and substances, found at various depths of the earth, have been so bold as to contend, that the deluge did not extend over the whole of the earth, but only over the Eastern and other countries inhabited by man. They have so concluded, in the face of the Scriptures, given in the plainest words that could possibly be used to express the *universality* of that deluge. They have either failed to look carefully at the passages of Scripture on the subject, or they have wilfully overlooked or rejected those passages.

The following are the words of those Scriptures :—Gen. 7. 11, 12. “The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”—vs. 19, 20, 21, 22. “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth ; and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits up-



wards did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died."

The words in verse 19—"And all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered," are so precisely expressive and full, that it is impossible to give them any other meaning than that of the deluge having prevailed *over the whole of our globe*. By the words "the whole heaven," is meant that visible firmament, or heaven, many millions of miles *encircling this globe in every direction*, and which contains all the rest of the planetary system, and was called "*heaven*" by God himself, as we see in Gen. ch. 1, 8. Fifteen cubits,—or about twenty-six feet—above all the high hills and mountains under the whole heaven, "did the waters prevail which was quite sufficient to destroy all the living creatures on the dry land. And yet President Hitchcock, a D.D., and Lecturer on Scriptural subjects, has had the reckless boldness to say:—"There are reasons, both in natural history, and in the scripture, for supposing, that the deluge may not have been universal over the whole globe, but only over the region inhabited by man."

Now if he, or any other geologist, or any other person, holding this opinion, can point us to a hill or mountain, or any other part of this globe, that is *not* "*under the whole heavens*," some little notice or attention may be given to their unscriptural and mere suppositions and fabricated notions of a *limited* deluge.

The Rev. Mr. Stackhouse, in his voluminous work, "*A Complete Body of Divinity*," previously mentioned, has written most elaborately and convincingly concerning the Deluge, its *universality*, and on various other points connected with it. The following are some of his principal facts and arguments on the whole subject:—"It seems to be a manifest point that the truth and certainty of a deluge was always acknowledged by the ancients: nor was the extent and *universality* of it ever called into question till some modern authors, observing the difficulty of finding out waters sufficient to drown the world, in the manner that Moses describes it, have ventured upon a very bold expedient. *They say* that Noah's flood was

no more than a national inundation, confined to Judea and the regions thereabouts. The Scripture, on the contrary, gives us the fullest account imaginable of entire destruction, viz.: that *all flesh which moved upon the earth, whether man, or cattle, or creeping thing, or fowl of the heaven, all died and were lost, except Noah, and such as were with him in the Ark.* \* \* \* The Divine Historian furnishes another argument, as demonstrative as any, when he tells us that "*the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven, (and consequently quite round the earth), were covered; fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered.*" \* \* \* We cannot imagine how hills and mountains of water could have hung about Judea as if they had been *congealed*; or how a large mass thereof could have stood upon the middle of the earth like one great *drop*, or a trembling *jelly*, and all the places about it remain dry and untouched. All liquid bodies are diffusive, and therefore from the very nature of the element, the water could not ascend to the tops of the highest mountains without diffusing itself over the face of the earth; and consequently, if ever there was a deluge which rose to the height which Moses describes, it must, of necessity, have been *universal*." Referring to the objection that the whole earth was not inhabited at the time of the deluge, the Rev. author says:—"Tis a groundless and forced conceit to imagine that Judea only and some other parts about it in *Asia* were stocked with people when the deluge was brought upon the old world, for if we consider the *longevity* of the first inhabitants, and the pretty near equality of their ages, we shall soon perceive that in the space of sixteen hundred years mankind would become so numerous that the chief difficulty would be where we should find countries to receive them." He then mentions, as is true, that there are traditions concerning the deluge among the nations of the four quarters of the globe, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. He proceeds by saying "If we will but turn aside the surface and look into the bowels of the earth itself, we shall find arguments enough for our conviction; for the *beds of shells* which are often found on the tops of the highest mountains, and the *petrified* bones and teeth of fishes which are dug up hundreds of miles from the sea, are the clearest evidence in the world that the waters have, some time or other, overflowed the highest parts of the earth. That these are *real shells* the nicest examinations

both of the *eye* and *microscope* do attest ; and that they are *true bone*, may be experimented by burning them, which, as it does other bones, turns them first into a coal, and afterwards into a *calx*."

On the words of Scripture, "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened," the same Rev. author has thus written :—"By the 'opening of the windows of Heaven,' must be understood the causing of the water which was suspended in the clouds to descend upon the earth, not in ordinary showers, but in floods, or, (as the Septuagist interprets it), in *cataracts* or spouts of water. It is certainly more than probable, (because a matter of Divine revelation), that there is an immense body of water enclosed in the center of the earth, to which the Psalmist plainly alludes when he tells us that God '*founded the earth upon the seas, and established it upon the floods* ; that he *stretched out the earth above the waters* ; that he *gathered up the waters as in a bag*, (so the best translators have it), and *laid up the deep, or abyss, as in a storehouse*.' \* \*

In the Proverbs wisdom sets before our eyes, as it were, the very form and figure of this abyss :—"When he prepared the Heavens I was there, when he set a compass upon the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when he strengthened the fountains of the abyss." Here is mention made of the *abyss* and of the *fountains of the abyss* ; nor is there any question to be made but that the fountains of the abyss here are the same with the fountains of the abyss which Moses mentions, and *were broke up*, as he tells us, at the deluge. And what is observable in the text, the word which we render *compass* properly signifies a circle or circumference, or an orb, or sphere, so that there was, in the beginning, a sphere, orb, or arch, set round the abyss, according to the testimony of *Wisdom*, who was then present."

"Tis a groundless objection then, to suppose that there could be any defect of water sufficient for a deluge, when the storehouses, both of the *superior* and *inferior* regions, were so well replenished."

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, has also written on the same subject in the following terms :—on the words, "I do bring a flood," Gen. vi. 17, he gives the original Hebrew word *mabul* for *flood*, and says :—"A word used only to designate the *general deluge*, being never applied to signify any other kind of inundation ; and does not the Holy Spirit intend to show by this that no other *flood* was ever like this, and that it should continue to be the *sole* one of the kind."

After these facts and opinions of these eminently learned men, as to the *universality* of the deluge, the contrary opinion or rather supposition of President Hitchcock on the point, is of no validity whatever. Dr. Clarke writes thus, on the words :—‘ Were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened : ’—‘ It appears that an immense quantity of water occupied the centre of the antedeluvian earth ; and as these burst forth, by the order of God, the circumambient strata must sink, in order to fill up the vacuum occasioned by the elevated waters. These waters, with the seas on the earth’s surface, might be deemed sufficient to drown the whole globe ; as the waters now on its surface, are nearly three-fourths of the whole, as has been accurately ascertained by Dr. Long. By the ‘ *opening of the windows of heaven,* ’ is probably meant, the precipitating all the aqueous vapours which were suspended in the whole atmosphere, so that, as Moses expressed it, ch. 1. 7, the *waters that were above the firmament*, were again united to the *waters which were below the firmament* ; from which on the second day of creation they had been *separated*. These two causes concurring, were amply sufficient, not only to overflow the earth, but probably to *dissolve* the whole terrene fabric, as some judicious naturalists have supposed ; indeed this seems determined by the word, *mabbul*, translated *flood*, which is derived from, *bal*, or *babel*, (he gives the original Hebrew words) to *mix, mingle, confound, confuse*, because the *aqueous* and *terrene* parts of the globe were then mixed and confounded together, and when the supernatural cause that produced this mighty change, suspended its operations, the different particles of matter would settle according to their specific gravities, and thus form the various *strata* or *beds* of which the earth appears to be internally constructed. Dr. Woodward in his natural history of the earth, has rendered it extremely probable that the whole terrestrial substance was amalgamated with the waters, after which the different materials of its composition settled in *beds* or *strata* according to their respective gravities. Some naturalists have controverted this sentiment, because, in some cases, the internal structure of the earth does not appear to justify the opinion that the various portions of matter had settled according to their respective gravities ; but these anomalies may easily be accounted for, from the great changes that have taken place in different

parts of the earth, since the *flood*, by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, &c."

The *universality* and the disrupting and destructive nature and effects of that deluge are quite sufficient to account to every dispassionate and unprejudiced mind, rationally and satisfactorily, for all those geological and other strata, real or supposed, the skeletons, or parts of animals, or other substances, or formations, which have been found, either on or under the surface of any part of the earth.

There is, as has been shown, sufficient Scriptural and other authority for believing that the outer crust of our earth rests upon internal seas, and when, as Scripture declares in Genesis vii. 11, "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up," that crust would thereby, of course, be everywhere shattered and riven asunder by those seas which were divinely caused to come forth and flow over the whole earth; and the waters from above and below having, as declared, "prevailed thereon an hundred and fifty days," doubtless in constant and turbulent motion, and also having continued, as mentioned, about one hundred days more before they were so abated that "the tops of the mountains were seen," it is perfectly evident that the incalculable multitude of carcases of all the varieties of beasts, birds, and reptiles, and other forms of animated nature, with the multitudinous remains of all other substances and objects which had been on the earth would, of course, be carried by the constant and violent motion of the waters in all directions, and to all quarters, in inconceivable confusion. As the waters subsided and "returned from off the earth," as the Scripture declares, all that confused mass of carcases and other substances would, of course, descend with the waters, and be conveyed and sink down into greater or lesser depths of the innumerable cavities of the earth which had been caused by that previous rending asunder of its crust. This reasonable view of the subject is in no way opposed to the Scriptures concerning it, and will perfectly account for various *substances, forms, and remains* being found in regions of the earth to which they were not indigenous; and for shells and other marine substances being found in the tops of high mountains; and the elephant and rhinoceros in great masses in Siberia, mixed with *marine substances*. It was a most merciful arrangement of the wise and gracious Creator to convey from the surface of the earth the remaining visible portion of the objects of that

destruction, so that when the human race again appeared upon the earth they would not be offended, or in any way injured by the presence of those objects, which, for the most part, would have been of quite revolting description.

And now, it may be truly and confidently said that there is nothing in any of these facts, statements, and cited authorities on the subject contrary either to Scripture or to natural phenomena, or to reason, and ordinary sense and intelligence, but all are quite in consistency with them. Their evident accordance with the letter and meaning of the Scriptures is alone sufficient to stamp their reliability, and warrant their full belief; while those opinions of the two periods of Creation, with a long interval or gap between them, and a limited, or partial deluge, are altogether destitute of any Scriptural sanction or support, and are the mere conceptions, or rather inventions, of some geologists, sceptical or infidel, as to divine revelation, and a few other speculative writers. Professor McKnight has indeed positively said that "the Biblical doctrine of Creation is divisible into two parts," but he has not cited or referred to a single passage of Scripture to support that assertion.

No attempt has been made to answer, in any special or enlarged manner, any of those various geological or other books or treatises which have been published and herein referred to, as erroneous, for the sufficient reason, that they are contrary to the plain letter and meaning of the inspired Scriptures on the subject, and therefore utterly unworthy of belief. It would therefore have been an useless, as well as an almost endless task, to have examined them all, with any speciality. The more modern publishers of those erroneous opinions, are in fact little else than mere *plagiarists*, retailing the conceptions, inventions, and mistaken or exaggerated statements and arguments of previous writers,—some of them sceptical, as to divine revelation on the subjects in question. The whole of those writings embodying those statements and erroneous opinions, being the mere suppositions and conceptions of speculative and fallible men, the following Scriptural censures and warnings in Col. 2. 8, and 1 Tim. 6. 20, very aptly apply to them :—"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men :"—"Oppositions of Science falsely so called which some professing have erred concerning the faith."



